

Indiana Protection & Advocacy Services (IPAS) cannot respond to all protection and advocacy needs within the state. Thus, the priority setting process helps us determine which issues and groups have the greatest need so that our limited resources can be put to the best use.

In August 2014, the IPAS Commission will finalize priorities and objectives for the federal fiscal year beginning October 1, 2014 and ending September 30, 2015 (FY 2015). We are using the months of June and July 2014 to solicit input and gather data to help us in the development of our new priorities.

If you would like to share your ideas and comment concerning the following proposed objectives, please submit comments by July 29, 2014 by:

- Phone: (800) 622-4845 ext 440
- Fax: (317) 722-5564
- E-mail: [info@ipas.in.gov](mailto:info@ipas.in.gov) with a subject line of "FY 2015 P&O Comments"
- Mail: Indiana Protection and Advocacy Services  
4701 N. Keystone Ave., Suite 222  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46205
- Or in person by attending the Public Meeting on August 9, 2014

## **IPAS'S Proposed Priorities for Fiscal Year 2015**

**Abuse and Neglect — Freedom from abuse and neglect is a fundamental right. One of the primary purposes of IPAS is to work toward the elimination of abuse and neglect of individuals with disabilities.**

The following are proposed objectives, which IPAS staff will work toward to reduce abuse and neglect of individuals with disabilities during FY 2015:

- Review allegations of abuse or neglect of individuals residing in a facility operated by Indiana's Division of Mental Health and Addiction (DMHA) and take appropriate actions as necessary.
- Review 20 allegations of abuse and neglect on behalf of individuals with disabilities to ensure that the allegation is reported to the responsible entities and take appropriate actions as necessary.
- Review five allegations of abuse and neglect on behalf of individuals with traumatic brain injuries to ensure that the allegation is reported to the responsible entities and take appropriate actions as necessary.
- Review allegations of abuse or neglect of individuals residing in Community Mental Health Centers and take appropriate actions as necessary.
- Review allegations of abuse or neglect that resulted in the death of an individual who resided in a mental health treatment facility and take appropriate actions as necessary.
- Review allegations of inappropriate use of restraint or seclusion and take appropriate actions as necessary.
- Review 85 allegations of abuse and neglect on behalf of individuals with intellectual disabilities/developmental disabilities to ensure that the allegation is reported to the responsible entities and take appropriate actions as necessary.
- Continue to represent prisoners with serious mental illness in class action lawsuit to diminish the use of segregation.

- Review allegations of abuse or neglect of individuals residing in facilities designated as a psychiatric residential treatment facility (PRTF) and take appropriate actions as necessary.

**Equal Access and Other rights — Individuals with disabilities must have access to programs, services, technology, polling places, buildings and housing.**

The following are objectives, which IPAS staff will work towards to increase access for individuals with disabilities during FY 2015:

- Review allegations of rights violations as defined by SAMSHA; discrimination under the Fair Housing Act and ADA: and take appropriate actions as necessary.
- Review three allegations of disability based discrimination that may have systemic implications and take appropriate actions as necessary.
- Review allegations of treatment rights violations of individuals with mental illness and take appropriate actions as necessary.
- Review allegations on behalf of individuals residing in state operated facilities when there is proposed or instituted restriction of a conditional right and take appropriate actions as necessary.
- Review three allegations of disability based discrimination that may have systemic implications and take appropriate actions as necessary.
- Review five cases involving alleged rights violations and the use of the internal complaint process of the service provider, in situations not involving abuse or neglect and take appropriate actions as necessary.
- Review allegations made by Social Security beneficiaries that their Representative Payee does not allow them to work in their community and take appropriate action as necessary.
- Assure that Social Security beneficiaries are afforded their right to work in the least restrictive environment in their community and take appropriate actions as necessary.
- Conduct financial review and interviews of Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and/or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) beneficiaries whose benefits are being managed by a Representative Payee for the purpose of ensuring that their living conditions are safe (when the Representative Payee is also providing housing) and that their basic living needs are being met.
- Assist or represent individuals with disabilities in the grievance procedure set forth in the Indiana Help America Vote Act (HAVA plan).
- Review 30 allegations of discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act, Fair Housing Act, or other disability discrimination law and take appropriate actions as necessary.
- Participate and take an active role on the Resident/Human Rights Committee meetings of the facilities operated by the Indiana Division of Mental Health and Addiction.
- Participate and take an active role on selected committees, groups or task forces that have systemic implications concerning policies and practices to assure compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended.
- Participate and take an active role on selected committees, groups or task forces that have systemic implications concerning policies and practices affecting the rights of individuals with disabilities.

- Participate and take an active role on selected committees, groups or task forces that have systemic implications concerning policies and practices affecting the disability rights issues of individuals with traumatic brain injuries.
- Strengthen policies and practices affecting the State's response to disability rights issues affecting individuals with intellectual disabilities/developmental disabilities through participating and taking an active role at least 75% of the meetings of select committees, groups, and task forces.
- Represent ten individuals in their appeal of reduced Medicaid waiver services when the alleged reduction in services will have a serious and negative impact on the health and safety of the individual, or when the reduction of services places the individual at risk of being placed in a more restrictive setting.
- Represent three individuals in their appeal of denied eligibility for Medicaid waiver services.

**Special Education — Students with disabilities are more likely to experience discipline in school resulting in termination or reduction of their educational services. Furthermore, violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act and Article 7 continue to be violated.**

The following are objectives, which IPAS staff will work towards to help special education students receive a free and appropriate public education during FY 2015:

- Review five allegations of the improper use of restraint/seclusion by a school and take appropriate actions as necessary.
- Review allegations on behalf of students where the school is not providing appropriate educational services and take appropriate actions as necessary.

**Employment— Historically, individuals with disabilities have experienced a higher rate of unemployment or underemployment, which represents a significant barrier to achieving the level of independence and productivity that many people with disabilities wish to attain.**

The following are objectives, which IPAS staff will work towards to increase the opportunity for individuals with disabilities to attain full employment during FY 2015:

- Review complaints on behalf of individuals seeking employment services regarding Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) or Centers on Independent Living (CIL) eligibility determination and take appropriate actions as necessary.
- Review complaints of improper or inadequate services provided to a beneficiary by a service provider, employer or other entity involved in the beneficiary's return to work effort and take appropriate actions as necessary.
- Review complaints regarding failure of VRS and CIL in providing choice to individuals seeking services under these programs and take appropriate actions as necessary.
- Review the quality and completeness of Individual Plan for Employment documents developed by VRS as they relate to the individual's identified vocational services and supports as well as the individual's choice(s) and take appropriate actions as necessary.
- Review the quality and completeness of Plan of Services documents developed by the CILs as they relate to the individual's identified services and supports as well as the individual's choice(s) and take appropriate actions as necessary.

- Review complaints on behalf of five individuals with traumatic brain injury seeking employment services from Indiana Vocational Rehabilitation Services or other employment networks and take appropriate actions as necessary.

**Education and Training — Individuals with disabilities, parents, guardians, and advocates need information and support to enable them to effectively self-advocate. The general public should also be informed about disability rights.**

The following are objectives, which IPAS staff will work towards to increase awareness about disability rights and the exercise of those rights during FY 2015:

- Develop and distribute information concerning voter registration, access to polling places and the right to cast a vote, including information regarding the state's grievance procedure and IPAS's role in representing individuals.
- Provide education and training about assistive technology, disability rights, and IPAS to individuals with disabilities, parents, guardians, families, advocates, and/or service program providers.
- Participate in one assistive technology conference.
- Respond to education, training and assistance requests to individuals with disabilities that will promote their participation in the electoral process.
- Develop and disseminate transition materials to all transition aged students, aged 14 years through 22 years, in three Indiana school districts.
- Conduct other outreach activities to increase awareness of the Protection and Advocacy for Beneficiaries of Social Security's (PABSS) program.
- Provide education and training about disability rights, self-advocacy skills and IPAS to individuals with intellectual disabilities/developmental disabilities, parents, guardians, advocates and/or service program providers.
- Provide education and training about disability rights and IPAS to individuals with disabilities, parents, guardians, advocates, and/or service program providers.
- Provide education and training about disability rights and IPAS to individuals with Traumatic Brain Injury, parents, guardians, advocates, and/or service program providers.
- Support education and training efforts of self-advocacy organizations to increase awareness of disability rights.
- Collaborate with Brain Injury Association of Indiana (BIAI) as sponsors and exhibitors of the Annual BIAI Conference.
- Provide education and training about employment, disability rights and IPAS to individuals with disabilities, parents, guardians, families, advocates, and/or service program providers.
- Conduct training for family members concerning the rights of individuals with mental illness.
- Conduct resident rights training for consumers at selected Community Mental Health Centers.
- Support the education and training events of consumer-based organizations holding events for consumers to increase their awareness of disability rights.

- Support the creation of a Crisis Intervention Team program in an Indiana Law Enforcement entity.
- Continue development of web-based resources to empower individuals and families with disabilities.
- Monitor all proposed federal and state legislative initiatives that potentially affects the rights of individuals with disabilities and the protection and advocacy system.
- Implement one project targeted to underserved individuals with disabilities, concerning disability rights issues, IPAS services and successes.
- Implement two outreach projects targeted to minority populations with disabilities concerning disability rights issues, IPAS services and successes.
- Solicit input through the continued development of web-based resources to allow multiple means of submitting comments.
- Publish and disseminate an annual IMPACT and invite readers to submit comments.

**Information and Referral — The IPAS Commission continues to support the efforts of the staff to provide timely and accurate information about disability rights for individuals with disabilities, their families, as well as advocates, and members of the public.**

The following are objectives, which IPAS staff will work towards to provide timely and accurate information about disability rights during FY 2015:

- Respond to requests for information and referral and technical assistance to individuals with disabilities, their families, and professionals about disability rights and provide information and technical assistance concerning the exercise of these rights.

**Administration – IPAS strives to provide high quality advocacy services that are responsive to the needs of individuals with disabilities and their families. IPAS continues to ask our clients about their experiences with IPAS to help us identify how we can improve our services.**

The following are objectives, which IPAS staff will work towards to increase awareness of IPAS and the advocacy services that are provided during FY 2015:

- Maintain or exceed 87% affirmative ratings of all responses on all assessed parameters of the Information and Referral Customer Satisfaction Survey.
- Maintain or exceed 90% affirmative ratings of all responses on all assessed parameters of the mailed Customer Satisfaction Survey for closed cases.
- Monitor all proposed federal and state legislative initiatives that potentially affects the rights of individuals with disabilities and the protection and advocacy system.
- Gather input through a survey concerning critical disability rights barriers